/281 cont./

i) His social role.

756 626 The paje represents the highest intellectual level of the native povoado, and, not only that, but he is also the stickler for the observance of the tribal laws. He knows them, teaches them, and demands their fulfillment, being able to punish (34),

> 34. He is, then, the major opponent of the assimilation of our culture on the part of the forest dweller.

with sicknesses, lightning, and, finally, malefices, disrespect toward traditional practices.

756 [852] [844] He presides over all social life, that of the family as well as of the group. When a child is born, the one who will blow on it, exorcise it, and paint it with carajurú /carajura/, in order that it will grow up strong and free from sicknesses, is the pajé; and he will also give the medicines to the woman in labor.

[553] In some tribes the giving of the name is done in the presence of the pajé. Covering the child with smoke with his indispensable cigar, under the inspiration of the moment, he will give or will suggest the name to the father, who is about to choose a name indicated by any circumstance whatsoever, perhaps even an indecent name.

[881] When the girl reaches puberty, the pajé will spend some time with her, giving her timely theoretical and practical instructions about maternity and obligations inherent in it.

At the time of the masculine initiation, it falls to him to teach the young men the traditional legends, their rights and duties as members of the group, the ritual practices, and to verify their ability by means of interrogations, punishments, flagellations, fasts, etc.

He is also the principal instructor of the Komũ (see VII - 2, e (3)), on whose capacity he will pass judgment, and of whom he will always be the supervisor, gathering them together periodically in assembly and giving them opportune directions for every circumstance.

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To produce farinha, which is mainly for trade, and chicha, which is mainly for sociability, she draws upon what is normally her "spare" time. She gives up the evening hours of rest, moments of gossip, play with her breast baby, and food foraging in the brush, which she regards as a pleasant diversion from the back-breaking manioc routine.

A Cubeo woman cannot be coerced to work any more than a man can be. Her willingness to work hard depends, in the case of a married woman, upon her regard for her husband in the first place, but also upon her general relations with the community at large. The Cubeo know that a lazy woman is a disaffected woman and they are conscious, accordingly, of the social importance of marital felicity. The only control the community has over a domestic situation is by maintaining a generally high level of good feeling. Needless to say, Cubeo women are not and do not consider themselves to be abused. A woman who does not care for her husband will leave him or, if her laziness is deep-seated and represents a grievance against the community as a whole, she will urge her husband to leave with her. The fact is, the feeling against indolence or apathy toward work is so strong that even a thick-skinned person can sense the unvoiced community disapproval. Thus, in the absence of strong political authority the productivity of a Cubeo community depends in the main upon all of the subtle factors of kinship, sexual attractiveness, and satisfaction, and of public morale. An unproductive community is normally not underprivileged by virtue of location or of tools but simply by its own lack of social health.

FISHING

Fish are abundant and there is hardly a day when fish are not part of the diet. The basic Cubeo meal consists of manioc cake and fish. Every male, from puberty to the grave, is a fisherman. Fishing is the regular masculine routine. Most fishing is individual – a man sometimes accompanied by a young son in a small canoe fishing with hook and line, or a man (also accompanied by a young son) fishing in shallows with bow and arrow. An Indian fishes his own stretch of river at a preferred place. If a man wishes to join another at the same place there is no quarrel, since fishing is never competitive. There is some rivalrous display of a catch but only a good-humored kind. Unlike gardening, which follows a rigid routine, fishing is flexible; a man follows his hunches and preferences, the seasons, and the species of fish and their habits. Some fishing is by torchlight, at night. The men do not necessarily leave for the river at the same time,

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Marriage

614 615 The rule in marriage is that a wife cannot be taken from within the sib or phratry. She may be taken from another tribe and, of course, from any of the other two phratries. There is no actual prohibition against marrying a woman from one's own community if she belongs to a group that is outside the phratry. As I have already noted, such marriages are not common because of a preference for marrying someone from a distance. Since true friendship is apt to mean brotherhood for the Cubeo, and so is identified with exogamy, the parties to a coresidence marriage, the man in particular, are made to feel as though they were behaving indecently. The only case of a coresidence marriage that I learned about was complicated somewhat by an issue of adoption, but it illustrates the ambiguity of feeling the Cubeo have about such marriages, nevertheless. A boy, born a *Bahúkiwa*, was orphaned and adopted by the *Hürüwá*, a sib of the opposite phratry. He then married a *Hürüwá* girl. Opinion was divided. The boy and his supporters claimed that he was *Bahúkiwa* and so the marriage was proper. The other side argued that since he was raised by the *Hürüwá* he had no business marrying a *Hürüwá* girl. Since the girl's family allowed the marriage to stand we must assume that the boy's position was legally sound. Marriage is preferred between age equals, and since a groom must be forceful enough to make a good impression he will not marry until his very late teens and so neither will the girl. The term for marriage is *nomíkükü*, meaning simply "woman getting."

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The Cubeo have no dread of menstruation and menstrual taboos are relatively minor. A man will not copulate with a menstruating woman because he believes it will make him lazy. On the other hand, if there is a sick person in the house a menstruant will move and live in a shelter nearby, or else the ill person cannot recover. For her part the menstruant must avoid the river, or she will be killed by the water anaconda. She may not enter a canoe for fear that the headman of the fish will destroy the canoe.

Menstrual blood (*hive*) is not human blood, but is believed to be blood of the moon. The moon, according to the Cubeo, is an ardent hunter who comes down to earth to copulate with unmarried girls and with women who are not pregnant. No one conceives by the moon. The moon is said to deflorate the woman, causing her to bleed. The hymen, according to this belief, grows back and the moon repeats his sexual connection each month. When a woman has erotic dreams she knows that the moon will come to her.

SEX LIFE

Under Cubeo rules of phratric exogamy the young people of a community may reach the age of marriage without having had sexual relations with an eligible marriage partner. The young people are limited to clandestine incestuous affairs and to public homosexual play. It was difficult to get information on the sex life of the unmarried, although I was aware of affairs between sib brother and sister. One informant told me that it was not improper for brother and sister to indulge in external coitus. According to this man, it was intromission that constituted incest. True coitus between sib brother and sister is not regarded lightly. Offenders may be put to death, and their souls after death, it is said, will be animals that will not associate with people. I never witnessed any gesture of sexual intimacy between a grown boy and girl of the same sib or phratry. Young children who indulge in heterosexual play are shamed by the older boys for ignoring the proprieties of privacy.

As for homosexual play, girls stroke one another's nipples to produce erection, and boys sometimes indulge in mutual masturbation. This kind of play is public and involves no shame. I have already mentioned the Cubeo enjoyment of body contact. In the younger people it is a mild form of homosexual eroticism. True homosexuality, however, seems to be rare. I learned of no case of persistent male homosexuality, and only one case of a woman. This woman developed strong male characteristics and eventually, it is said, she grew a penis.

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Since the Cubeo lack status rivalry the explanation must be sought in subinstitutional relationships. The nature of food pathology illustrates one form of psychic conflict that disturbs the relationship of sibmates. In incidents of food pathology the subject was often deprived of a father, a particularized and personal tie, and displayed his resentment in a calculatedly resentful way. It may be said generally of the Cubeo that they hold to exceptionally high standards of personal warmth. When these standards are not met, as often in practice they cannot be, the people are unduly disturbed. Thus, it is not difficult for a man to feel that a brother has let him down and so seek vengeance in adultery. In a more general vein, it can be said that the solidarity of the sib has its natural psychological limts. Adultery, theft, and nonsharing are in Cubeo culture the most common manifestations of such discord. That fraternal discord may be more than superficial would be indicated by the accusations of sorcery that sometimes flash between brothers.

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Unlike the phratry, the sibs have an officer whose job it is to deal with discord. The headman has no authority, but he has tact and the prestige of office. His difficulty is that since he cannot allocate punishments, assess injuries, and award compensation, he must deal only with the intangible and volatile aspects of mood. He can either soothe outraged feelings or exacerbate them, smooth over the difficulty or force a showdown and the departure of the culprit. The function of public opinion in an intrasib dispute is essentially to ratify a determination to expel a culprit. The Cubeo will prefer to overlook offenses within the sib as much as possible. But when the issue is out in the open the most likely way for equilibrium to be restored is for someone to leave. The departure of an offender is not an example of fission. When feelings have cooled he will return. Sib fission is exemplified by the Independents and the Satellites, composed of sib sections who are simply dissatisfied with the headman or with their fellows. Thus fission contributes to equilibrium by draining away the malcontents. Curiously, while the departure of the disaffected removes an immediate cause of potential stress, it leaves in its wake another form of stress in the form of a more diffuse sentiment of dismay that all is not well with the sib. The headman is well equipped to deal with this more generalized feeling, however.

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The normal point of cleavage in the sib is the small group of blood brothers. True brothers form the most solid of all Cubeo linkages. The fraternal group is truly the core of Cubeo social structure. Yet this innermost orbit is far from indestructible. The Vaupés region is spotted with social "ions," free-floating men who, with their wives

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